

## Satellite Remarks to the League of United Latin American Citizens Convention

July 8, 2004

Hector, thank you very much. I appreciate so very much the invitation to take part in your celebration of the 75th anniversary of LULAC. And I'm so honored to speak to members of America's oldest leading Latino civil rights organization.

Listen, you picked a great place for your convention, Hector. San Antonio and Texas are—San Antonio is a wonderful city, and Texas, of course, is a great State. And thanks for giving me a chance to speak to you.

I appreciate—listen, one of the reasons I enjoy working with LULAC so much is I appreciate your commitments to freedom and to entrepreneurship and to the values of *familia y fe*, which help to make our society a stronger place. And what I believe is those commitments deserve recognition and respect of all of our Americans. See, we share the same goal: We will keep working to make this Nation a welcoming place for Hispanic people, a land of opportunity *para todos* who live here in America.

And so, thanks, Hector. I appreciate your leadership, and I want to thank your friendship. It is good to see you via video, and I appreciate you working closely with my administration. I want to thank Ken Cole for the introduction as well, and I want to thank you for sponsoring this important gathering of American leaders.

I also want to thank people there who are representing my administration. I know that Tommy Thompson is with you. He's doing a fantastic job in running the Department of Health and Human Services. Thank you for being in Texas, Tommy, and thanks for the job you're doing on behalf of all America.

I also see a great Texan and great American, a person who greeted me at the base of the stairs of Air Force One when I snuck off from Texas last Thanksgiving to go say

thanks to our troops in Baghdad, Iraq, and that, of course, is General Rick Sanchez. General Sanchez, God bless you, sir, and thank you for your great service to America.

You know, when I think of General—when I think of the story of Rick Sanchez, it reminds me that America is the Nation of the open door and must remain that way. Every generation of our history has brought new immigrants and new stories. And those immigrants have brought great strengths. When men and women arrive here ready to work hard or care for their families and honor the law, they make our country more, not less, American. And Rick Sanchez's history and his family history reminds me of that aspect of our country.

You see, in the United States our aspirations matter more than our origins. And my administration is committed to this basic principle: *El Sueno Americano es para todos*. And all deserve a chance to achieve the American Dream.

Success in America, of course, depends on personal effort. I believe that a compassionate Government should encourage and reward that effort. An opportunity society must educate every single child, encourage a spirit of enterprise, treat immigrants with fairness and respect. I believe America has made progress in all these areas, and I want you to know I look forward to working with LULAC to do more.

The first commitment of an opportunity society is a good public school in every neighborhood. To succeed and rise in the world, a student must know the basics of reading and math. Parents are entitled to expect these basics from their schools. I believe strongly, every school has a duty to teach the basics.

My judgment is, too many children in America have been just shuffled through the system without learning essential

skills\*. It's easy to quit on a boy or girl from an immigrant family. We've got to end that practice of social promotion. We've got to stop the practice of hearing only excuses from a bureaucracy. When it comes to our fundamental obligation to children, there is no excuse for failure, because I believe every child can learn. And that is why I proposed and signed the No Child Left Behind Act.

We've increased Federal funding for Title I schools, which serves the poorer students, by 41 percent over the last 3 years. And in return, because I believe every child can learn, we're requiring schools to measure performance of all students to make sure every child is learning. And that is how you make sure that every child can read and write and add and subtract. That is how you can make sure the dreams of every parent in America can be achieved.

We're measuring achievement in math and reading, and we're getting results. You see, when you raise the bar and call upon results, you can get results. The Council of Great City Schools released a study on the progress since the No Child Left Behind took effect. The study examined 61 urban school districts and found that more than two-thirds of grades tested showed improvement in both reading and math amongst Hispanic students, and that's what we want. We want progress, substantial progress. And my pledge to you is, I'm going to continue to work to bring about more progress so every child can have a chance to realize the great promise of a country.

What I hope you do is join me in understanding that when politicians criticize testing and high standards, they do a disservice to our schools, to the parents, and to the students. In other words, what they're saying is they're choosing bureaucracy over our children. Instead of undermining standards, we're striving to meet those standards in every part of America. I made a promise

to LULAC and to others to improve the Nation's public schools. I'm delivering on that promise.

Secondly, the commitment of an opportunity society is a healthy and growing economy in which entrepreneurs are encouraged to take risks and to build their businesses and to hire new workers. I believe that starts with a respect for the earnings of those who pay the taxes.

And so, in order to get this economy moving after a recession, an emergency, and an attack, we've given tax relief to every person who pays Federal income taxes. And by leaving more money in the hands that say—that spend and save and earned, our economy is strong and getting stronger.

And one reason why is because tax relief has helped millions of small-business owners and entrepreneurs who pay taxes at the individual income-tax rate. You see, if you're a small-business owner, you're likely to be what they call a Subchapter S corporation or a sole proprietorship, and therefore, you pay taxes at the individual income-tax rate. And because new jobs or most new jobs are created by small businesses, I thought it was wise to cut taxes on small businesses to encourage economic growth. And we're seeing the results of this tax relief and the stimulus for small businesses.

America has had now 10 consecutive months of job growth. Since last August, our economy has added more than 1.5 million jobs. The unemployment rate today is lower than the average rate in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. But most importantly, and I think one of the most important statistics of all, is that there are millions of new small businesses owned by members of the Hispanic community. And that doesn't surprise me, because the entrepreneurial tradition is strong amongst Americans—Hispanic men and women.

According to the most recent data, Hispanic-owned companies employ about 1.4 million Americans and carry a payroll of

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\* White House correction.

nearly \$30 billion. And what I'm here to tell you today is our economy is stronger, our society is better off because Hispanic-owned businesses are thriving and creating jobs all across America.

We have many issues to discuss, but I want to end on this important issue. The third commitment of an opportunity society is a policy of fairness and justice toward those who have come to America to live and work. Our country must confront this basic fact: Jobs being generated in our growing economy are not being filled by American citizens, and these jobs represent an opportunity for workers who come from abroad, who want to put money on the table for their children. Yet current law says to those workers, "You must live in a massive, undocumented economy."

And so we've got people in America working hard who live in fear and who are often exploited. And this system isn't fair, and it's not right. So I proposed reforms that will match willing foreign workers with willing American employers when no Americans can be found to fill the jobs, a system that would grant legal status to temporary workers who are here in the country working, that will increase the number of men and women on the path to American citizenship.

The reason I do so is because I know this proposal is good for our economy, because it would allow needed workers to come into the country under an honest, orderly, regulated system. And the reason I made this proposal is because it's humane. It would bring millions of hard-working people out of the shadows of American life. This proposal reflects the interest and best values of America, and Congress should pass it into law.

As a citizen of Texas and the Governor of Texas, I have been privileged to see the many contributions of Latinos to our economy, to our State, to our culture, and to our Nation. As President and Commander in Chief, I've seen other great contributions. Some 85,000 Latinos have

served in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. More than 100 have given their lives. Over 400 have been injured in combat. Our Nation will never forget their service and their sacrifice to our security and to our freedom.

I want to tell you about one of the most meaningful moments of my Presidency, if you've got a minute. I had the privilege of meeting Master Gunnery Sergeant Guadalupe Denogean. Sergeant Denogean was an immigrant from Mexico who had served in the Marine Corps for more than 26 years. He was wounded in combat in Iraq. When he was brought home for treatment, they asked the Sergeant if he had any special requests. He said he had two. First, he wanted a promotion for the Corporal who had helped to rescue him, and second, he wanted to become an American citizen. And I was privileged to be right there at the Bethesda Naval Medical Center the day he raised his right hand and took the oath of citizenship. I'm proud to be the Commander in Chief of this good Sergeant, and now I'm proud to call him fellow citizen.

You see, brave Americans like Sergeant Denogean are sacrificing for the cause of our country, and America has needed that sacrifice. Our men and women in uniform have removed two terrorist regimes that threatened our people and are now helping the Iraqi and Afghan people get on the path to democracy and self-government. By fighting the terrorists abroad, they have made American people more secure here at home. By standing for the cause of freedom, they're making our world more peaceful. And by acting in the best traditions of duty and honor, they're making our country proud.

This country of ours has been through challenging times in the past few years. We're overcoming those challenges, thanks to the courage and the character of the American people. We're ready to meet every challenge that comes our way and, of course, to seize new opportunities. And

as always, America looks to the future with confidence.

Once again, I appreciate the good work of LULAC and of your members and of your leadership. Thank you so very much for having me. *Que Dios los bendiga, y que Dios bendiga a los Estados Unidos. Gracias.*

NOTE: The President spoke by satellite at 2:20 p.m. from the Map Room at the White House to the convention meeting in San An-

tonio, TX. In his remarks, he referred to Hector M. Flores, national president, League of United Latin American Citizens; Kenneth W. Cole, vice president, government relations, General Motors Corp.; and Lt. Gen. Ricardo S. Sanchez, USA, commander, Multi-National Force—Iraq. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

### Statement on the Death of President Thomas Klestil of Austria July 8, 2004

Laura and I offer our deepest condolences to the people of Austria and to the Klestil family on the death of President Thomas Klestil.

President Klestil was a distinguished statesman who had previously served as Austria's Ambassador to the United States and as Austria's Permanent Representative

to the United Nations. President Klestil was well known in the United States as a man dedicated to freedom and human dignity, and as President he was a committed and eloquent advocate of these values. We join all the people of Austria in mourning his passing.

### Remarks in a Discussion at Kutztown University of Pennsylvania in Kutztown, Pennsylvania July 9, 2004

*The President.* Thanks for coming. I'll be there in a minute. Please be seated. Thanks for coming. It's an honor to be here in Kutztown, Pennsylvania. Thank you for coming out to say hello. I appreciate it.

If you see some of your neighbors who were lining the road, waving to us in the bus, tell them thanks too. It's great hospitality here in this part of the world.

I'm here for a reason. I'm here to let you know that I want to serve the people of this country for 4 more years. I'm here to let you know, and I have a reason to ask for your help and your vote. I want

this country to be safer and stronger and better for every one of our citizens.

I'm also the first to admit that I can't win without your help. So I'm here to ask for your help. I would like for you all—not only am I asking for the vote, I'm asking for you to register your friends and neighbors to vote. And then when you ask—when you register them, you might get them to vote for old George W., while they're at it.

I'm looking forward to the campaign. I'm looking forward to the campaign. I've got plenty of energy to run a race. I know